

Look at Your Posture!

Agricultural Extension Service
Ohio State University



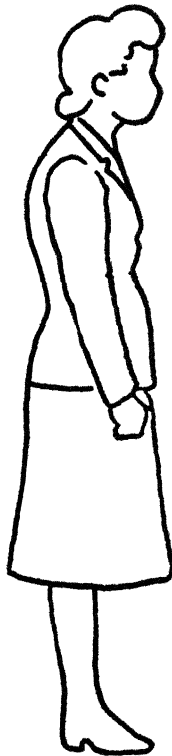
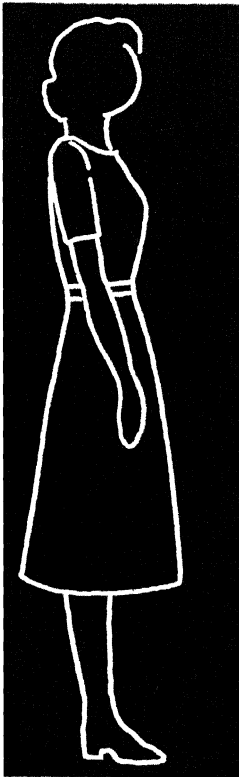
Look at Your Posture!

by Thelma Beall, home management specialist

How do you stand? How do you lift? How do you reach? How do you carry?

The way you use your muscles may make the difference between that "all in" feeling and the ability to finish off a big day's work with a flourish. The amount of work you do, your food, clothing and working conditions also may contribute to that tired feeling.

When You Stand



Stand tall, so you feel like a growing plant, shooting up—not like an umbrella spreading out! Lift up in front, pull down in back is a good rule.

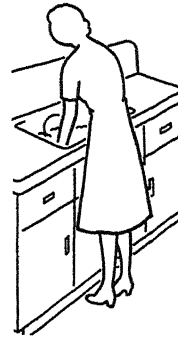
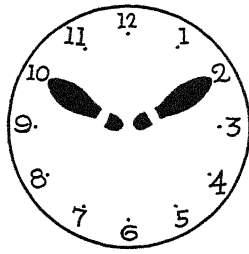
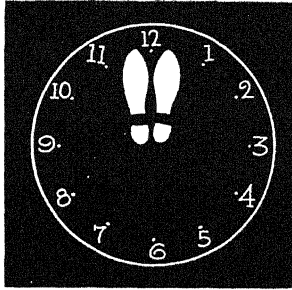
Bring your "front" up by pulling in your chin and standing tall.

Move your "dining room" upstairs by tightening the muscles in the wall of the lower abdomen.

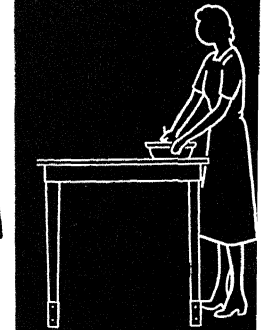
Move your "sitting room" downstairs by rocking the pelvic bones forward and pulling your "tail" in.

Stand with your feet placed at 1 minute to 12, instead of turned out at 10 'til 2. The weight should be on the outer border of the foot so the inner ankle bones do not bulge.

You stand to do many jobs at the sink, kitchen mixing counter, range, ironing board, cutting table, sorting table, and washing machine. Be sure they are at the correct heights for you.



Stand tall. When you work while standing, be sure your work surface—sink, table, mixing counter, ironing board, etc.—are of the correct height for you. Point your toes at a minute to 12—not at 10 'til 2.



When You Walk

Walk so your heel hits the ground first. Carry the weight of the body forward on the outside of the foot from heel to toes. If you walk with your weight on the inside of your foot, it tires easily. Swing your leg from the hip, bend your knee as it comes forward, and straighten it as you put your weight on it.

When you walk upstairs, hold your body erect. Use the thigh muscles to lift the body. When you come down, reach forward with the toe and bend the knee. Your head should follow a straight line.

When You Sit

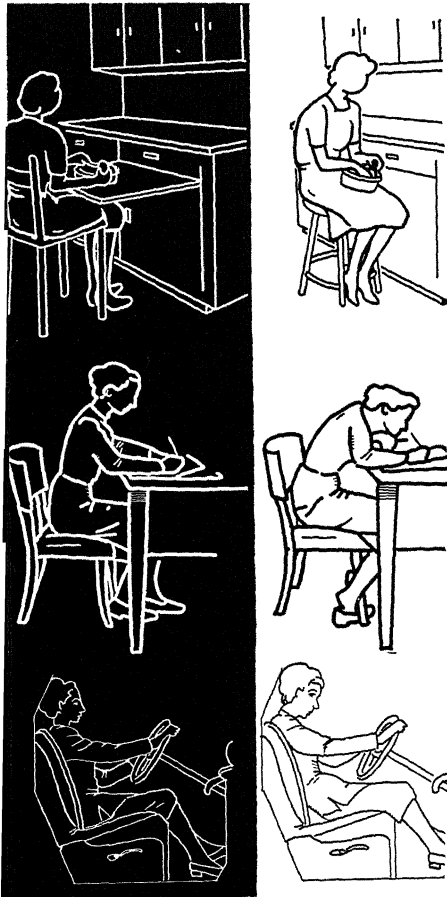
Sit for those jobs which you can do sitting down, or alternate sitting with standing. Use a comfortable chair or stool. It should have a seat large enough to support your body comfortably and of such height that you do not have to reach up to or stoop over your work. If your feet do not touch the floor, use a foot rest.

Sit at a pull-out board to do kitchen jobs. As you sit in your work chair with your feet on the floor, the board should just clear your lap. This lets you work with your shoulders in a comfortable, relaxed position.

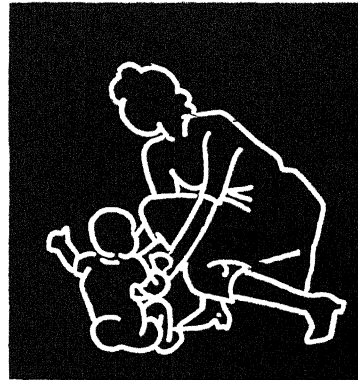
Hold your trunk erect with muscles of abdomen tight, and hips against back of the chair. Crossing your ankles avoids the cramped feeling of crossing your legs at the knees. When you get up from a chair, tuck your feet under your chair and use the lower legs as levers for pushing. You won't need to push with your arms.

If you drive a car or tractor sit with back straight and abdominal muscles tightened. Get a seat that fits and adjust it so you don't have to stretch to reach the pedals.

When you sit on the floor or ground, lower your thighs by bending your knees. Put one foot forward and cross the other behind your body and to the side. Let your weight rest most on the foot at the back as you bend the knees and sink down. When you get up roll your weight onto your knees and step to your feet.



When You Lift

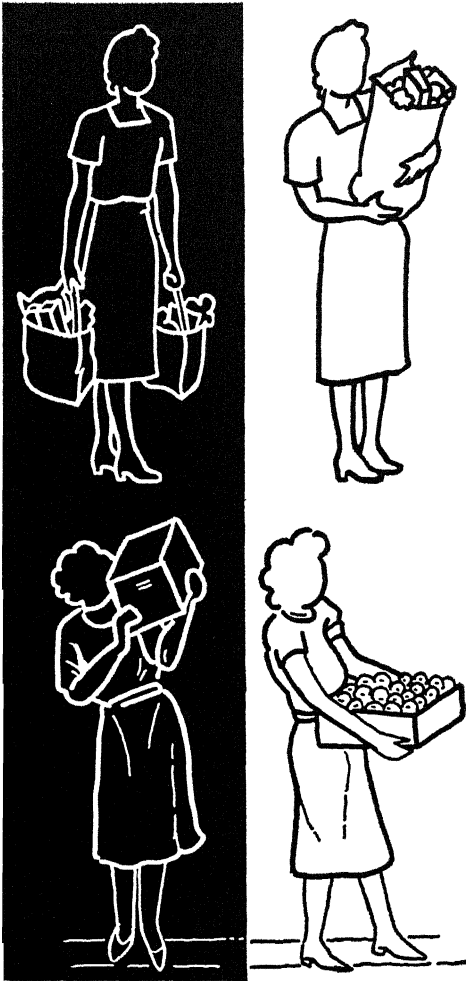


When you lift things from low levels, stand close to the object to be lifted and bend at the knees. Keep your back straight. This is really “sitting at the floor.” Take hold, keep your back straight, and gradually straighten your knees so you lift with leg muscles instead of your back. Don’t lift by bending at the hip. It causes strain on the back. The bent knee position is the right one too, for such jobs as weeding, looking into a low oven and dusting baseboards. Get this habit by bending your knees when you pick anything from the floor. Don’t stoop.

To avoid abdominal strain, hold your abdominal muscles tense when you lift.

Don’t lift too much. In Ohio industry, law prohibits women from frequent or repeated lifting of more than 25 pounds. Before you lift, consider your physical characteristics and the levels to which and from which you are lifting. If possible, store at waist level heavy articles that will be used at that height.

When You Carry



When you carry, try to keep your shoulders level and your back straight. Carry something in each hand to help keep body balance and permit free movement. If you do this long, however, it tires hands and arms and interferes with breathing.

If you must carry a heavy load on your arm, place it as near the elbow joint as possible.

“Tray” carrying, or carrying a load at the front of the body, tires arms and wrists and may cause pressure on abdomen and thighs. If you do this often, you may develop round shoulders.

Use a cart for your heavy carrying jobs.

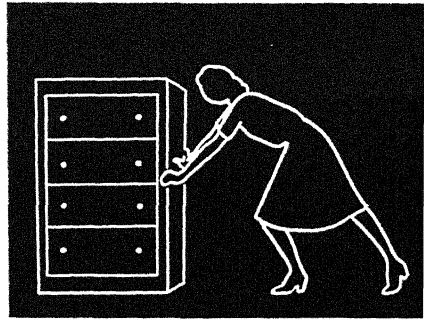
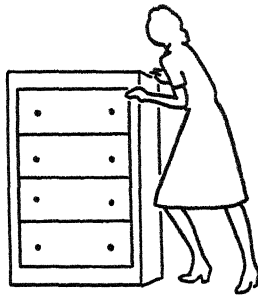
Shoulder carrying is a good way to move a load more than a few steps. It leaves the legs free and does not cramp the chest to a great degree. If possible get help to put the load on your shoulder, or get it high enough to get your shoulder under it by bending your knees.

Hip carrying permits you to take up a load from a table with ease and leaves one arm free. It interferes with normal walking and breathing.

When You Reach

When you reach up, hold abdominal muscles tight to avoid strain. Don't stretch to reach from a ladder. Move it. Keep frequently used articles within easy reach.

Everyday jobs such as making beds and dusting offer opportunities to practice tensing the abdominal muscles. This will help prevent “abdominal sag.”



When You Pull

When you pull, make your whole body work. Tense the abdominal muscles to avoid strain. If you are pulling something from above the head, like an overhead garage door, bend your knees.

When You Push

Push with your whole body instead of only your arms. Tense the abdominal muscles. Push the vacuum cleaner or lawn mower with your body.

To open or close heavy or “bulky” doors or gates, you may have to combine these movements with those of lifting—bending the knees and keeping the back straight.

A job like hoeing is a combination of pulling and pushing. Use the whole body instead of part of it. Bend at your hips instead of sagging your shoulders. Tense the abdominal muscles. Hoes, brooms, mops and other such tools are easier to use if handles are long enough.



Weight Lifters

Home economics publications of the Agricultural Extension Service are the greatest little “weight lifters” a homemaker can bring into her home. They lighten her load by applying the strength of good information to everyday jobs.

Extension provides most publications free. There are home extension bulletins in these fields: child development and family life; foods and nutrition; home furnishings; home management; and textiles and clothing.

See your home economics extension agent for new bulletins and other homemaking information. She is in most county offices of the Agricultural Extension Service, and the telephone number is in the book.

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